

Free
SOP



STRANGE THOUGHTS

Queerness. Anticapitalness. Randomness.

Welcome to the first (and hopefully not
last) issue of Strange Thoughts! It is

the result of many insomnia
nights sat up with my beautiful,
brick-like, Windows '98 laptop. I
kind of rushed the assembly
in order for it to be ready for
Queeruation in Barcelona, so it's
not as pretty as I would have
liked. Ah well. Enjoy!

Kristofski

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First Things First
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(Art piece)

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isn't Coming
any time
soon

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binders

We, the undersigned, are graphic designers, photographes
which the techniques and apparatus of advertising have
effective and desirable means of using our talents. We
believe, applauding the work of those who have flogged th
stomach powders, detergent, hair restorer, striped too
diets, fattening diets, deodorants, fizzy water, cigarettes
of those working in the advertising industry are wasted
ing to our national prosperity. In common with an increa
uration point at which the high pitched scream of consu
there are other things more worth using our skill and expe
and periodicals, catalogues, instructional manuals, indus
tures, scientific and industrial publications and all the ot
cation, our culture and our greater awareness of the worl
sumer advertising: this is not feasible. Nor do we want t
reversal of priorities in favour of the more useful
and more lasting forms of communication. We hope
that our society will tire of gimmick merchants, sta
tus salesmen and hidden persuaders, and that the
prior call on our skills will be for worthwhile purpos
es. With this in mind we propose to share our expe
rience and opinions, and to make them available to
colleagues, students and others who may be interested.
signed: Edward Wright Geoffrey White William Slack Ca
Gerald Jones Bernard Higton Brian Grimbley John Garner K
Ivan Dodd Harriet Crowder Anthony Clift Gerry Cinnamon I

rs and students who have been brought up in a world in persistently been presented to us as the most lucrative, have been bombarded with publications devoted to this eir skill and imagination to sell such things as: cat food, hpaste, aftershave lotion, before shave lotion, slimming roll-ons, pull-ons and slip-ons. By far the greatest effort n these trivial purposes, which contribute little or nothing numer of the general public, we have reached a satimer selling is no more than sheer noise. We think that rience on. There are signs for streets and buildings, books trial photography, educational aids, films, television fea her media through which we promote our trade, our edu d. We do not advocate the abolition of high pressure con o take any of the fun out of life. But we are proposing a

THE FIRST THINGS FIRST MANIFESTO

oline Rawlence Ian McLaren Sam Lambert Ivor Kamlish en Garland Anthony Froshaug Robin Fior Germano Facetti Robert Chapman Ray Carpenter Ken Briggs

This manifesto was written in 1964 by designer Ken Garland. It was at a conference where various designers were giving talks. The vast majority of them talked about the campaigns they had devised and how they'd made so much money from consumerism that they were participating in, and saw the amount of money as a mark of how good it was. Ken Garland got increasingly annoyed at the way people talked about their work and the money they made. He decided to write a manifesto to express his views.

KEN GARLAND, 1964

Ken Garland's manifesto has been reproduced here in its entirety. It is a powerful statement of the principles of design that have been forgotten in the modern world. In 2000, Adbusters magazine published a modernized version of the manifesto, updating the language to reflect contemporary thinking and issues. The First Things First Manifesto was created by people who have made a career choice as they don't care about the ethics behind the jobs they do, despite more anti-corporate type course (one of the books on our recommended reading list). Most design communication is about advertising, and most design is corporate based, it tends to remind me of a vegetarian option at a restaurant, usually just one or two, and what there is is basically just suchlike (the design equivalent of Quorn). There's so much potential for the use of visual communication in queering information that we give out. Design has a bad name in recent years, But visual communication is a truly beautiful thing, and it can be used to create positive change in the world.

The story behind it goes thusly: he was at a designers conference, and the majority of the people were talking about the advertising money for various big companies. They were glorifying in the amount of capital their designs generated for the clients as they gesticulated throughout the conference, and started scribbling onto a napkin. At the end of the conference, he got up and read what he had written, with great passion and zeal. He received a round of rapturous applause from most people present, and some admiring looks from others. What he read was to become the 'No Logo' First manifesto, and was signed by 22 designers, photographers, illustrators and other sorts of visual communicators. It is now legendary, as it was the first time anyone in the design community seriously questioned the ethics of design as a political and commercial tool, and tried to seek an alternative. It was updated in 2005, and some of the references made more in tune with the current situation. The manifesto is very important to me. As a design student, I am surprised to find that many students specifically want a job that gives them lots of money, and don't seem to care about the fact that the course I'm doing is supposed to be a critique of consumerism (the reading list for the course includes books like 'No Logo'). Most of the books about visual communication are aimed at advertisers. When the design isn't advertising, it's usually for a really bad restaurant. There's hardly any choice to begin with, except for copying the advertising format, except for charity projects and some interesting things that can be done with design; book designs either for bands or just for fun. The design can be used in all sorts of ways to enrich people's lives.

Qu

V

Trans

leer

35.

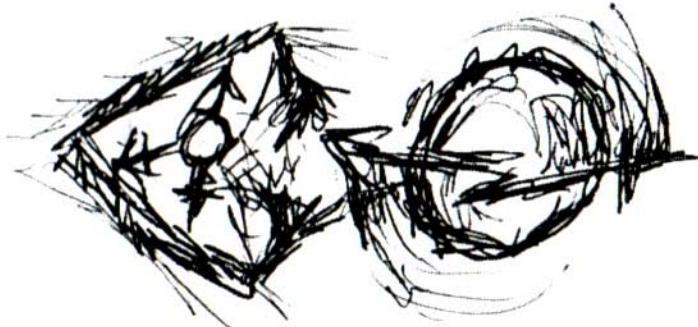
sexual



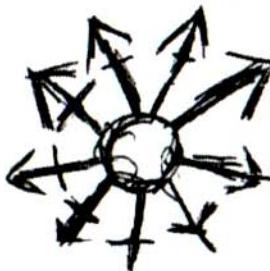
This is something that's been troubling me somewhat recently.

Specifically the position a trans boy holds when it comes to feminism and queer theory. I recently had a drunken conversation with a queer friend of mine on the subject, she was commenting that all the trans people she knew were into queer theory and stuff, yet one would think that as queer theory dictates that there are no boundaries and we can construct our own gender and sexuality regardless of our physical appearance, people who held these values would not feel the need to physically change themselves to conform with a gender role. As a female to male transsexual myself, this certainly gave me something to think about. I have been having testosterone injections for just over a year now, and they have completely changed my appearance and how people see me, but I only got interested in queer stuff over the summer (2004) when I went to Queeruptation in Amsterdam. I've been thinking, if I had been into queer stuff before, would I have still gone ahead with the hormones? There are certain times when this specifically comes up, when I see extremely masculine women who say they don't feel totally female yet have grown to be satisfied with their physical appearance, or when I'm among feminists who are talking about the amazing spirituality and beauty of menstruation and the female form. I can't help feeling that there must be something I missed; that if I had only given myself a bit more time I'd have learnt to love my feminine traits and I wouldn't need the painful and intrusive surgery that I want so badly. Maybe it's all just a state of mind, maybe it's really true that I could live with a completely feminine physique and still feel completely content and happy with myself, maybe it's all a big mistake...

Unfortunately, as with many things in life, the theory and the practice don't always match up. With my newfound freedom and growing self-confidence I feel from the changes that the hormone injections have given me it's easy to forget how I felt before.



There's the old transsexual cliché of "man-trapped-in-a-woman's-body", but I never really felt like that. I didn't feel like it was my body at all, it was more like it was on loan or something. Also, I felt pre-pubescent; I could physically feel that I didn't have the stuff I should have had running through me. The hormones have completely changed how I feel about myself. Although I'm still not very confident, I feel that I'm starting to build on it and I can feel that I'm at least likeable. I don't feel that I'm "becoming a Man", more that I'm becoming myself. In fact I now feel freer to express all sides of me, masculine and feminine, and I feel that inside I inhabit more of an in-between position than specifically male. I don't think that I feel the need to go through this so that I can fit into a typical male gender role (in fact, most of the time when I'm not among queer people I would rather not be put in a category with *any* of the people around me), but because I feel ~~that~~ that is the body I should have. I think it's quite similar to when people lose a limb and still feel like it's there. My internal body map is different from my actual body, and I just want to make it fit together. I know transsexual people who don't intend to have surgery or take hormones yet still identify as trans, and for them this works and they can live their life to the fullest. As with most things, it's up to the individual and it's impossible to create an overriding theory that encompasses the whole of transgender experience. It's great that these people can still feel themselves whatever their physical appearance is, and I wish that I could do that as well. But the simple fact is I'm so much happier since starting hormones, I feel so much better about myself, and I know that this will only continue to be so when I have surgery. At the end of the day, queer is about difference and accepting and celebrating difference, which includes different ways of dealing with transgender feelings.

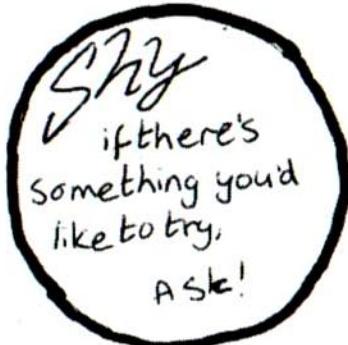


Update, May 2005

Well, it's been a few months since I wrote that and I've been thinking about having chest surgery more. I have realised that when I'm among queer people I feel no desire or need to have chest surgery, it's only when I'm in "normal" company that it becomes any sort of issue. The fact that we don't (yet) live in a queer utopia, and the chances are I will probably (unfortunately) be spending most of my life amongst not-queer people makes me think that in my current state of mind I should have the surgery, yet part of me feels that this is simply selling out (which, to be fair, is something most of us have to do at some point), and I should hold on to the feeling that I have amongst queers. I'd love to walk around without my top, the only thing that stops me doing it is (at best) the funny looks and (at worse) abuse and violence I would be susceptible to, depending on where I was. Of course, I won't tell any of this to the psychiatrist at the Leeds Gender Identity Clinic. If I tell him then decide I do want surgery, he probably won't let me have it. He might even stop my hormone injections, which would be a horrible, horrible thing. According to the GIC, you're either transsexual, so you should have hormone therapy and all the surgery you can, or you're not, so you shouldn't have any treatment at all. The psychiatrist I've seen had never heard of queer theory. How can I explain my confusion on the subject to him when he doesn't even know what the hell I'm talking about? I really feel like I need to discuss this with people who understand both sides of the argument. Maybe we should start a queer councillor movement, giving people advice from a queer perspective, instead of having to explain the whole of queer theory to someone before they can understand where you're coming from. Though I suppose we could just talk to each other normally and it would be the same thing basically.

Shy

According to the Smiths song "Ask", Shyness is nice. However, according to the same song, Shyness can stop you from doing all the things in life you'd like to. I have to say I've come to agree with both sides of that argument. In my youth I'd had myself convinced that I was uber-confident, outspoken, crazy, loud, ra ra ra. When I realised that this isn't always the case for me, and that I can be incredibly shy, it was something of a release. I didn't always have to be the centre of attention, I didn't have to be the constant joker and friend to all. That had been something of a defence thing against my insecurities, deflecting the depression and isolation I felt. Shyness is nice in that respect. However, it is also true that shyness has stopped me from doing at least some of the things I'd like to do, usually things involving chatting people up and, with luck, having sex with them. I can't think of one time I've ever made the first move on anyone, or at least a first move that was reciprocated (it doesn't help that the last few people I've asked out turned out to be lesbians. Very typical for me). Shyness has stopped me having any proper relationship with anyone, i.e. anything longer than a one-night stand with someone I actually give a shit about (I did go out with a guy for 3 months while in 6th form, but he was a bit of a twat really). I thought that maybe shy people could have special badges or something, so that others could recognise that they weren't the best at those kinds of situations and that if they wanted anything to happen, they would have to make it obvious to them and maybe make the first move. Like in bondage circles, where different coloured handkerchiefs mean different things, there could be something that says "I'm shy, you're going to have to make the first move". Then if two shy people saw and fancied each other they would recognise a partner in shyness and feel more encouraged to make a move themselves. It could be a wonderful thing. Anyway, to get you going, here's a badge for all you lovely shy people out there to cut out and keep. Wear it with pride!





I didn't think I

phobia

has the capa

had any

until I realized that the mere **idea** of a **scorpion**

city to fill me the the utmost

dread.

To me they are symbols of pure **death and destruction.**

They seem all-powerful and invincible.



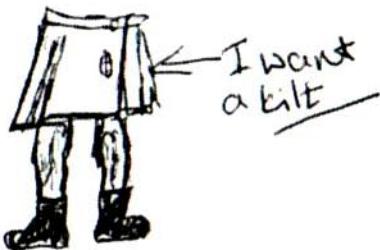


Normal

There was a time, not so long ago, that I just wanted to be normal. A time when I just wanted to blend in, be like everyone else. I saw myself, knew I wasn't how I should be, and could only see one viable alternative. That's the binary system for you; flip from one straight to the other. Full surgery, full integration, until even the experts would have problems telling you apart from the others. Chop bits off here, stick bits on there, until normalisation is finally achieved. I wore dark baggy clothes, not chosen for how much I liked them or how they expressed me, but for how much of me they covered up. I kept my hair army short, even though I hated it. I stifled any attraction I had towards boys. I drank pints even though I would have much preferred a gin and tonic. All to be normal. After all, that's why we do it, isn't it? To fit in, go unnoticed, slip back into society with our new persona, get a job, get married, have kids and live in constant fear of anyone finding out our past?

So I started the process. The NHS waiting list was stupidly long, so I visited a private psychiatrist in London. He was very nice, he saw what a normal boy I was and prescribed sustanon 250, one shot every two weeks, repeat until death. I was So Happy. Finally the normalisation could occur.

Then things started to go a bit...wonky. The hormones were, and still are, amazing. They changed me completely inside and out. They have made me feel calmer and more content. They mean I can pass as male in any situation without question (as long as I keep my clothes on). They made me secure in my masculinity.



Which meant I could start fucking around with it. It meant I could feel comfortable expressing both sides of myself. *All* sides of myself. It meant I could grow my hair long. It meant I could wave my hands around while I spoke as much as I wanted. It meant I could call myself a feminist. It meant I could express my attraction for boys as well as girls. It meant I could drink the most elaborate, stupidly named cocktails I could find.

But I want to do more. I want to become a proper gender terrorist. Though I'm generally too much of a pussy to let my past become public knowledge (although, unsurprisingly, the rumours have been circulating in college). But I want people to know. I want people to see the complete me, to have their heads fucked and their minds expanded at the amazing possibilities the world has to offer. I want people to be shocked, to lie awake at night wondering how the hell this could happen in the real world, when everyone knows such things are neatly contained for our own amusement in such people as Lilly Savage and Nadia from Big Brother¹. I want them to fall to their knees when they see the culture and ideals they have stood for all their lives smashed to pieces under my feet. I want them to see me, along with my queer sisters and brothers and others, and I want them to feel the fear feel the thrill, as they realise change is in the air, cos we're not going away, we're not following their rules,

We are not normal!

¹ Lilly Savage is the drag queen alter ego of TV person Paul O'Grady, and Nadia was the extremely flamboyant Portuguese male to female transsexual who won the reality TV show Big Brother in 2004.

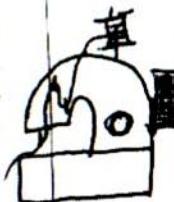


I'm aware The Revolution isn't coming any time soon.

But I sincerely hope that it will come at some point. That people will wake up to the fact that basing all aspects of life around something as devoid from humanity as money is just wrong. That one day, people will realise that the accumulation of useless stuff is not the measure of one's worth as a person, and that society's current idea of success is majorly flawed. I look around and all I see is people on a quest for money. Advertising, commercialism, shops cunningly designed to make you spend more time in them and buy more useless stuff. And power; there has been a big show of this the last few weeks with the general election. It seems very strange to me how the parties advertise themselves to be the best party to win, selling themselves like products. That is not democracy. Democracy would be if they simply stated in clear, simple terms what they would do if they got into power, without reference to the other parties, then people could make up their minds based on that. Unfortunately due to the apathetic climate in which we're living in people have more important things to think about than how the country's run. We're trained to believe that the most important things are that we're wearing the right trainers or that we drive the

flashiest car or use the most up to date mobile phone. We are given the illusion of choice, we can choose whether to buy full fat or light, we can choose Maccy D's or Subway, we can choose to wear our hair up or down. But where are our real choices in life? We can't choose if our country goes to war. We can't choose to live rather than spend every waking hour working a shit job just to pay the bills. It's even hard for people to choose not to get married, have 2.4 children, live in a semi in the suburbs, drive a fuel guzzling SUV, work a disgustingly well paid job in the city, never have time to see your children or spouse, and claim that your life's perfect and you have everything you could ever want. It's even hard for us to choose what we wear; I want more creativity in the form of DIY clothing, a resurrection of the beautiful craft of the seamstress/seamster. Not only is the creative process made more exciting by having something you can wear and use out of it but it's also a mighty fuck you to the fashion business, and it can be a very empowering experience knowing that you're wearing something you worked hard over and that there's no other like it in the world. Just like you. Fuck you, GAP clones.

We have an extremely limited choice of how we can define ourselves and what roles we choose to play at any one time. We need a revolution to show people how stupid and unnatural these



human dichotomy that perpetuated mainly through Christianity in the middle ages are; man-woman, good-evil, gay-straight, whore-virgin, government-masses, young-old, teacher-pupil. Grey areas are things to be celebrated, not shamefully brushed under the carpet. We all have something to offer in our different ways, not as part of a "target group" or as statistics.

I was watching a program about the American Indians today, and I found it extremely sad. It was talking about how the European invaders killed off thousands of the bison on which the Native Americans depended for survival. Cultures like the American Indians and Aborigines worked with nature; they knew how to live alongside other plants and animals and ensured there would always be enough of everything. They existed within the food chain and biological web. Whereas western societies are in constant battles against nature, trying to harness it, fool it, fight it off. The old ways of living in harmony are practically dead. We think that we can beat nature into submission, but we must remember that we are, despite appearances, part of nature; and if she dies so will we.

We're long overdue a revolution, if only to counter the damage done in the industrial revolution. People say that going back to a

*I've just read a book about evolution, which is why I keep going on about Darwin.

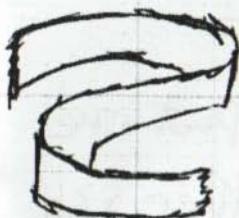
time before the advanced technology is going backwards in progress, but what is progress, really? I've heard people using Darwinist* ideas, talking about the "evolution" of mankind, but the fact is that the success of medicine is halting true evolution, so that argument is not valid. People use Darwinist ideas of "survival of the fittest" to explain capitalism, and people screwing each other over for personal gain. Social Darwinism is a load of bollocks. It is constructed from fragments of true Darwinism taken out of all context and warped for the social Darwinist's own benefit. The reason people screw each other over is because they're brought up to believe that it's right to screw people over for their own benefit. Social Darwinism will be shown for the lies it is come the revolution. Fashion and "cool" will be shown as the hollow, vapid, laughable idea that is it. And trampling over the masses simply to accumulate more stuff will be seen as utterly disgraceful. The fact is that revolutions only really happen when the whole country is in such turmoil that something has to snap and the people take action. In our society however, we are encouraged to engage with an atmosphere of complacency and apathy, and we're brainwashed into thinking everything is perfect and lovely as it is. The Revolution isn't coming any time soon.

D.I.Y Chest Binders!

As a rather large-chested trannyboy, I have spent quite a bit of money in the past on products that are intended to make the contrary appear to be the case. However, I later discovered that I could make one for much cheaper and that works much better than anything else I've tried. So I thought I'd share it here, for all the trannyboys and gender benders of the world to peruse.

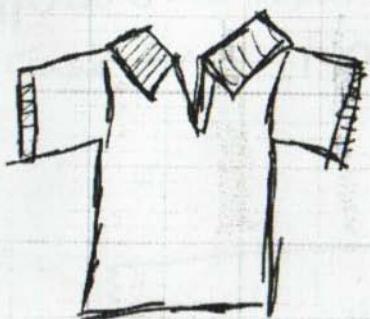


you will need:



3" wide elastic, twice as big
as the distance round your
chest

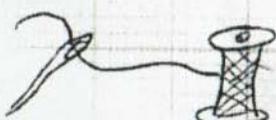
A b.t bigger than



An old Airtex top

(those ones they make you
wear for games lessons at
school)

About a foot of pre-
sewn hook-and-eye
strips (used for bodices +
corsets etc)



needle + thread
(or a sewing machine)



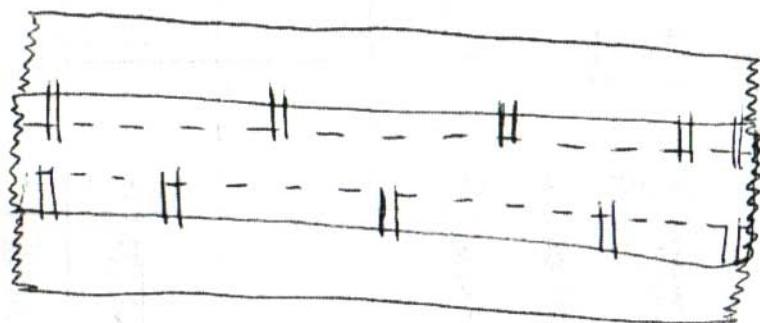
scissors.

pins/safety
pins

How to do it

1

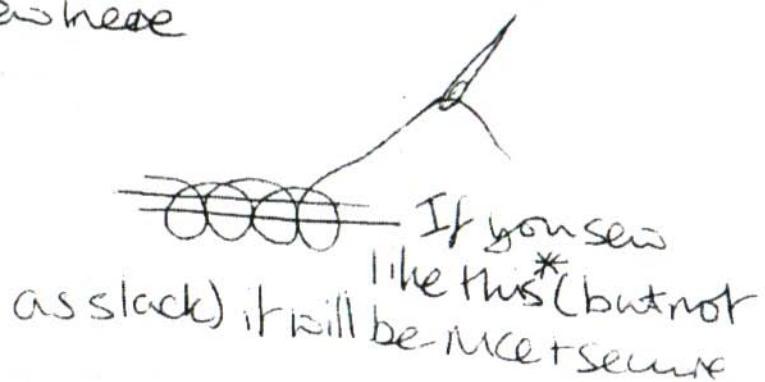
Cut the elastic into 4 and put one piece to one side. Lay the other 3 so they are alongside each other overlapping about an inch. Pin it, and sew as shown.



Key:

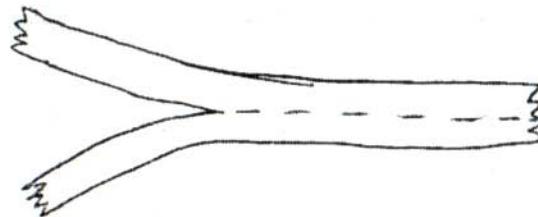
--- = X ray

|| = sew head

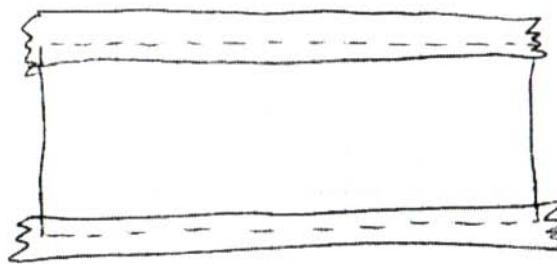


2. Cut a piece of the Airtex top the same size as the piece you've just made.

3. Cut the remaining piece of elastic in half lengthways



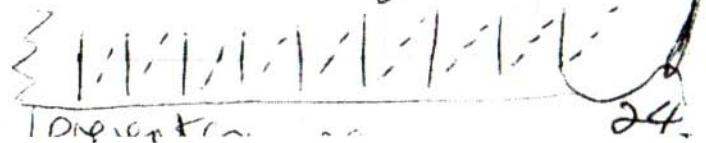
4. Sew the remaining elastic on either side of the piece of airtex top.



key:

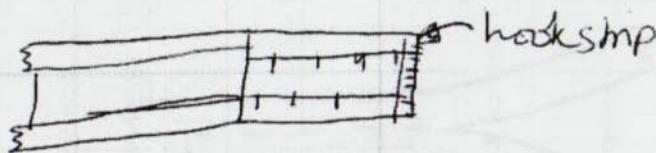
---(continues)
to be x-rayed
there as well

Sewing like
this will keep
elasticity and
Tension on.



5 Sew the two panels together along the shortest side.

6 Sew the hook half of the hook + eye strips onto the elastic edge.



7 Pin the eyestrip to the other side and my iron. Move it around until it fits and binds.

8 Sew the eyestrip into place and trim off the excess fabric. You can always make it smaller by sewing again up the seam between the 2 sections.

9. Wear it and have fun! *

The airtex panel means that it won't bunch up in the back in really painful ways. Plus it means you can buy less expensive elastic.

If you have any problems following this, email me and I'll try and be helpful. Or if this has been useful, let me know and I'll feel all warm and fuzzy from feeling like I've done something good for people.

go knstofski @ hotmail.co.uk

Thank you for reading Strange Thoughts #1! I
hope you enjoyed it.

I would like to thank the makers of
all the zines I have read for showing
me how it's done, Mishy for convincing me
that I could do it to, and all the queer
people of the world for existing. Hey, I know
it's cheesy, but that doesn't mean it can't
be true.

You can contact me by email
on: goknifski@hotmail.co.uk

or you can write to me and send
me stuff at: 21 Amcliffe Road,
Leeds,
LS16 5AP

Made by

Knifski, May 2005